

MILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND REFORMER

unjust hatred, the most painful betrayals. And thus the humble and the wretched, feeling that they had lost a great friend, were now mingling their gratitude and their grief with the admiration of those who deplored the immense loss which had befallen literature.

It was particularly from the literary standpoint that M. Abel Hermant next addressed the throng, and he did so admirably, setting forth both the characteristics and the limitations of the genius of Zola, who had perhaps failed to show sufficient penetration when dealing with the psychology of certain individual characters, but who had excelled in depicting what was called "the crowd." He had been a master in the art of assembling facts and personages: his crowds and Ms paintings of nature were full of life. And he had never sought common popularity. He had sacrificed nothing in order to curry favour with the multitude, as was done by those who were eager for success at any price. Far from flattering the masses, he had braved them, measured himself against them fearlessly, and not only in connection with the terrible truths enunciated in his novels had a clamour of anger and menace arisen around him. At last, passing to his peroration,—a very appropriate one,—M. Hermant said:

"At the close of one of his finest works¹ Zola describes a ceremony such as this, one unattended by a great concourse of people, but none the less painful for the few friends pressing around the

remains of an unappreciated artist. On retiring from the graveside one of that artist's most notable companions, one who resembles Zola like a brother,³ speaks a few words, —words of duty, comfort, and hope. Those words are certainly the only farewell that Zola himself desires from us, gentlemen, and I should feel I had failed

* "L'Offuvre."

^a Sandoz.